

I do not know much about gods; but I think that the river  
Is a strong brown god - sullen, untamed and intractable,  
Patient to some degree, at first recognised as a frontier; ...  
Then only a problem confronting the builders of bridges.  
The problem once solved, the brown god is almost forgotten  
By the dwellers in cities. (T S Eliot: The Dry Salvages, I)

BEHEMOTH: ● Australia: The above quote applies to several items in this Bilk. In Perth, Western Australia, according to the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 29 June, p.56ef, aborigines have occupied an abandoned brewery which stands at the site sacred to the natives as the nest of the Wagyl, the rainbow serpent. They want the government to demolish the building and erect a park at the site. But the Government wants to construct a building there, which would include a gallery of ancient Australian art as compensation for the natives. So far, police have arrested 5 protesters, including a Catholic nun, and 50 officers constantly block access to the building. This underlines, once more, the importance of purely mythical concepts of water monsters.

● Loch Ness: A recently published hiking guide for Scotland ( F & J Poziemiński: *Richtig Wandern - Schottland*. Cologne: DuMont 1989, p.110) claims: "If Nessie is ever caught, Inverness will be destroyed by fire and flood, according to a prophecy of the Brahan Seer." This would be a 17th century mention of the monster, but is more likely to be a 20th century invention. In the classic book on the Seer, A. Mackenzie's *The Prophecies of the Brahan Seer* (Stirling: Mackay 1935, p.58) the prophecy is printed without the monster reference: "the day will come when fire and water shall run in streams through all the streets and lanes of Inverness". Funny enough, this apocalyptic vision was interpreted by Mackenzie as "the introduction of gas and water through pipes."

ISIS: ● Bali: For the past 10 centuries, the inhabitants of the island of Bali have believed that their water goddess Dewi Danu is living in the crater lake of the Batur volcano. All irrigation work had to be in keeping with Agama Tirtha, "the religion of holy water". The whole system of consultations between the farmers, the priests and the water goddess was abandoned years ago for a more western and scientific approach. The result was a desertation of the once fertile agriculture of the island. Now two researchers of the University of Southern California, anthropologist Stephen Lansing and ecologist James Kramer were able to show that the ancient rites were ecologically almost perfect, and they have introduced a computer programme based on these rites that will re-establish the old system. (Geoffrey Cowley: *The Electric Goddess*, *Newsweek*, March 13, p.44) - This shows that not all mythical water creatures have their biological counterpart, and the attempts by cryptozoologist to find the "real" animal behind the folklore may sometimes resemble von Dänikens search for the robots behind ancient mythological drawings.

● Bibliography: *Lizard Man & Related Creatures*, in *Strange* 3, p.32 - 34; F. de Sarre on his hypothetical initial aquatic form of man, in *Mysteria* (Halver, W. Germany), No. 72, 1989: 4 - 18; *Sunday Sport* (the British tabloid), August 20, p. 1 & 7: Mum gives birth to mermaid, actually a baby with joined legs.

LEVIATHAN: ● Book: A new book about water monsters has been published, it is Michael Bright's *There are Giants in the Sea* (Robson Books, London 1989, pp. 224). It is the usual collection of sightings and anecdotes, mainly taken from already existing books and *Fortean Times*, with only very little additional material from the BBC files. It is really surprising how the same 100 sightings are published again and again, while little new research is undertaken. From British papers alone, I collected some 200 new sightings from the 1930s, never before published! Yet the book nevertheless has a good chapter on big marine animals as stimuli for monster reports, and a short update on Chessie.

● Bibliography: Sea serpent caught in Chesapeake Bay on July 26, 1840, was leatherback turtle: *Strange* 3, p.30/31; Heuvelmans on his alleged disentangling of the sea serpent (an excellent example for the cryptozoological attitude which completely ignores the folkloristic background of many such reports): *Strange* 3, pp. 10 - 15, 56 - 57.

USOS: ● Skandinavia: The recent accidents of submarines of the Soviet navy off Norway should convince even the most anti-Soviet reader that, if the Russians did actually violate Skandinavian territory as often as is claimed by the local armed forces, the Swedish coast would by now be littered with the wrecks of burnt-out subs! Fort had already noted in 1931 that to blame the Soviets had become one of the "conventionalized explanations" (Fort, p.637).

● Britain: Another net-incident? The Times (June 14, p.2a) reports that on June 13, the 50-ton trawler Majestic capsized between Orkney and the Shetlands while trawling. The sinking is believed to have been caused by an underwater wreck, on which the vessel's net snagged as it was being hauled on board.

● Soviet Union: A freshwater UFO - on June 6, a group of children observed a UFO landing on a meadow at the bank of a river near Konantsevo in the rural Vologda region of the Russian Republic. The thing proved to be a sphere, it split, and in it was "a headless person in dark garb...It struck them that the alien's hands hung lower than his knees". The craft vanished into thin air, the creature proceeded to the village. Russia is full of UFO activity this moment, but this is the only CE III so far reported (Saudi Gazette, 25 June, p. 7ef). Also, my report on the incident in SIGN (Basle), Nr. 2.

CRYPTOZOLOGY: ● Bigfoot: - On June 20, K Sam, 25, spotted a hairy Bigfoot in the Fort Bidwell Paitute Indian Reservation, Modoc Co., Cal. The creature was 8 ft tall, was walking upright and only 40 yards from the witness. Others have found tiny footprints in the area. Erik Beckjord is investigating (Saudi Gazette, 25 June, p.7d). - On Britains Radio 1 programme with Simon Bates, on August 21, in a broadcast from Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia, it was reported that "recently" two Americans had found 45 cm-footprints in the bank of a river - "Bigfoot lives here!" - The Daily Telegraph, August 21, p.15, in a story about Soviet newspapers: "They can read little bizarreries, too, like the report of the 'huge hairy creature with long arms and legs and shoulder length hair' which scared the wits out of people in a Russian town."

● Others: - Big hunt in Surigao, Phillipines, for a giant, 30 ft crocodile (Arab News, 19 July, p.16c). - In Parana province of Argentina, a puma has killed calves and other animals. Plastercast of the animals print were taken, police hunt the creature - but there are no native pumas in this part of Argentina, 400 kilometers northwest of Buenos Aires (Arab News, 11. July, p.16). - Ibrahim Al-Yahya discovered a living lizard imprisoned in a hole in a concrete pillar in Dawadmi, Saudi Arabia. The pillar had been cast a month before! (Arab News, 1 July, p.2a).

WATER FOLKLORE: ● Miracles: - According to Islam, Zamzam is the oldest well in the world. Its water has healing powers. In July, four were healed after drinking water from the Well (Saudi Gazette, 16 July, p.5). - Catholic church has accepted the healing of Delizia Cirolli as a new miracle cure affected by the sacred water of Lourdes (Der Pilger, Speyer, 16 July, p.1044). - A boy fell into the cold waters of Lake Maggiore, Italy, and survived on the bottom, in a depth of 30 - 40 metres for 20 minutes, until he was rescued! Shades of man's aquatic past, or a miracle (Arab News, 24 July, p. 24ef)

● Sunken Cities, etc: - Sunken city at the bottom of Semerwater, Yorkshire The Dalesman, March 1988, p.1014 (W R Mitchell: Looking at Semerwater). - The sunken land of Wales, with legends of submarine cities, off Borth, Cardigan Bay (K Stevenson: Wandering in West Wales, Great Outdoors, April 1989, p. 92 - 95). - SPUTNIK (Digest of Soviet Press, June 89: 22 - 29): "In summer Lake Ladoga fools the fishermen with mirages and frightens them with thunder coming from the lake's bottom". - New Soviet ideas about the Bermuda Triangle: ABC (Madrid), July 20, p.43cd.

MARINE LIFE: ● two wide sided dolphins spotted in East River, Ny (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 1 July, 13a, S Gazette, 28 June, 7h); whale songs (Newsweek March 20, 49); dolphins in US Army (Time, 24 April, 39); Giant sun-fish (mola mola) caught off Weihai, Shandong province, in the Chinese Sea. It weighed 68 kg, with a length of 1.5m, and 1.2 m wide (China im Bild, Aug Bild, August 8: friendship between girl and dolphin at Dingle, Eire, 5 - a thresher shark causes panic among bathers at French Mediterranean coast, and, due to Greenhouse effect, more tropical fish to be found off SW Engl coast.